

**EFFECT OF LEADERSHIP AND ACADEMIC CULTURE ON
IMPLEMENTATION OF SELF ASSESSMENT MANUAL IN PUBLIC
SECTOR UNIVERSITIES OF PAKISTAN**

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Abstract

The intent of this paper is to explore the effect of leadership and academic culture on the implementation of Self Assessment Manual (SAM) in Public sector universities of Pakistan. A questionnaire was sent to the Quality Enhancement Cells (QECs) of 25 universities. The respondents were only the top management (Vice Chancellors, Deans of the Faculties, Directors and Head of Departments). Academic culture and leadership were found as critical factors for the implementation of SAM in most of the universities. QEC is playing a significant role for implementation of SAM. Semester and Semester with Annual system of education are contributing better for SAM implementation regarding QEC role. QEC should launch an advocacy move for the self assessment in the institution. Semester system should be encouraged and practiced in higher education institutions in Pakistan.

Key words: *Self Assessment Manual, academic culture, leadership, quality in higher education.*

Introduction

In the last decade the higher education gathered special attention in Pakistan. The focus remained not only on quantity but also on quality of education. With improvements in the quality of education and better academic performance in public sector Universities, the need to evaluate and assess quality of education has increased.

The concept of quality was emerged in the early twenty first century which was although a very complex in nature and has become one of the most popular words of the century. The process of evaluation of quality in higher education is not so simple but it needs regular and continuous efforts to regulate the higher education institutions. The assessment for ensuring quality at higher education level requires proper care and commitment towards judgment of academic values and cultural understanding. Quality in higher education has proved to be a challenging task. The slogans like quality of life, total quality management, quality products and quality service were very common in the market. People are becoming conscious about quality not only daily life amenities but also in education (Jiayi, 2006).

Business organizations and the academic world gave different meanings to the term “quality”. The definitions used in business, is the “extent to which the product meets the demands”; another is “customer satisfaction” (Bornman, 2004). Quality in higher education is a broader concept. There is no clear divide in higher education that who is the customer due to the different perceptions on the meanings of quality. The academic world tries to define quality by using many other variables (Vroeijerstijn, 1995). The World Declaration on Higher Education (1998) declared that “quality in higher education is a multi-dimensional concept, which should encompass all its functions, and activities: teaching and academic programmes, curriculum, research and scholarship, qualification of faculty, management and administration, government, facilities student characteristics, buildings, facilities, equipment, infrastructure and the academic environment”. For enhancing quality self assessment internally and externally conducted by independent specialists are fundamental state of affairs. The significant differences among commercial and educational parties need careful concern (Srikanthan & Dalrymple, 2003). In higher education quality of services provided deal with people, the time of service delivery and complexity in measuring booming output and production in a quality review (Harvey, 1995; Owlia & Aspinwall, 1996; Yorke, 1997).

Quality was created by the industry after World War II, and then transplanted to education. On the other hand, the comparison of educational enterprises and the industry have shown that although they differ in nature from business perspective but they have some features like developing a flexible customer focused environment are alike (Hoffman & Daniel, 1995; Stensasen, 1995; Srikanthan & Dalrymple, 2003). Quality is something, which fits the purpose of the product or service. If the education provided fulfils its purpose, whatever that may be, then it is said to be one of quality, provided that it accords with publicly accepted standards of accountability and integrity. It is the ability to transform students on an on-going basis and add value to their knowledge and personal development. This is a definition which accords more with today’s concern for

higher education for the masses (Lim, 2001). Quality is one of the major concerns for higher education establishments. Day by day with the increasing demand of higher education the urge for quality is also increasing. Besides all the efforts and initiatives taken for the quality yet there exist the problem to manage quality in higher education institutions. (Becket & Brookes, 2005; Campbell & Rozsnyai, 2002; Cheng & Tam, 1997; Harvey & Knight, 1996; Luckett, 2004; Mehralizadeh, 2005; Srikanthan & Dalrymple, 2003; Owlia & Aspinwall, 1996). From stakeholders' perspectives the quality in higher education degree or academic program is considered as products. The students are considered as users of products and the graduates are ranked as outputs with job providers as their consumer. Students are also taken as clients and their grades are used to assess the quality of their performance (Beaver, 1994).

In the competitive world environment quality of education is becoming a very vital. It is need of the hour to change the teaching learning processes for improvement in quality. Educational institutions are forced to move towards this change for the sake of quality (Motwani, Kumar & Novakoski, 1995). Total Quality Management (TQM) seems to be an efficient and a modernized philosophy for quality management (Hammersley & Pinnington, 1999). It is taken as a process-oriented move towards enhancing efficiency and cost effectiveness (Fincher, 1994; Green, 1994; Moreland & Clark, 1998). Leadership or management style is one of the category of information flow and also important in the panorama of higher education. Implementation of quality in an organization is a multifaceted job as it needs the application of the leadership abilities of senior managers and the commitment of all staff. Therefore top management and leadership capabilities are essential in achieving quality for the successful organization (Gordon, 2002; Thornhill, Lewis, & Saunders, 1996). The commitment for improvement can only be obtained and sustained with strong and dedicated leadership *i.e.* top management investigations into the impact of specific types of leadership behaviors reveal varying degrees of effectiveness. Leadership behaviors directly affect organizational commitment. There is close influence of leadership behavior on organizational commitment (Bolman & Deal, 1991; Lee, 2002; Mosser & Walls, 2002).

Quality management system for continuous improvement is incomplete without effective leadership (Brigham, 1993). The ordinary errors faced during implementation of TQM in industry are lack of proper top and middle management. Leaders should set practicable mission and willingness for initiating change and provision of resources required for team work intended to achieve the predefined vision. Educational leadership remained at the top agenda for work in the last decades. The ultimate goal for educational leadership is to ensure the academic excellence. The institutionalized leadership has to examine the internal and external policies and their impact on the work force and the

stakeholders (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Friedman, 2004; Ho & Wearn, 1996; Kezar, 1998; Westerman, 1994).

Leadership in a university is very complex. It includes abilities of faculty and academicians to conceive the vision of quality. This aspect is not limited to the principals and/or vice chancellors or deans, but also required in instructors to provide the leadership in their classrooms. To improve the quality of one's institute, all teachers and administrators, need to be committed with their quality goals and measure their processes and activities, to improve the quality of their institutes. Every faculty member of institution must assess the quality of his/her work. This sort of leadership cannot be developed or continued by faculty and administrators without teamwork, long term quality goals, intensive efforts, proper training, right policies, and strong commitment, because they are responsible for developing an environment that encouraging and motivating faculty members. Therefore top management need to embrace Self Assessment as a strategy to achieve the quality results (Moosa, 2006; Storey, 1992).

The culture has a great link with organizational structure, and they should be match to each other. In case of a mismatch between them, organization may deviate from its stated objectives. While organizational structure can be changed easily through enactment of new rules and procedures, changing culture of an organization is a slow process and requires a holistic approach to organizational change of which organizational structure is just a one component. Traditional and bureaucratic management produces the bureaucratic culture while quality management nurtures the quality culture (Hofstede, 1991). Quality oriented organizational culture springs out from values of quality management that include but are not limited to egalitarianism, collectivism, partnership, trust, customer satisfaction, continuous improvement, cost minimization, innovation, and creativity (Bowen & Lawler, 1992; Kochan, 1995). Therefore, quality management should not be seen merely as a change in organizational structure or use of few quality tools and processes in organization. It only succeeds if it is adopted as a change in organizational culture whereby bureaucratic culture is to be replaced by a quality culture based on a unique set of values. Therefore, it is obvious, that quality management can only be effectively implemented in a quality oriented organizational culture (Kiggundu, 2002). There are four aspects of Management Processes which affect quality: Leadership, Administration, Quality Assurance Program, and Institutional Culture. Leadership and quality culture are the two main core values of TQM framework (Moosa, 2006; Venkatraman, 2007).

Many authorities such as W. Edwards Deming, Joseph M. Juran, and Philip Crosby documented that leadership is creating and supporting a quality culture. The quality components are essentially compatible with the values of higher education, but often the culture must change to support the principles. Members

need to shift their thinking about how work is done. The positive value in the culture brings continuous improvement that is based on continuous change. People are trained to feel comfortable with change and not fear becoming involved in improvement efforts. Planning for change is an attitude to be cultivated by the leaders in the institution. Leaders are essential in creating a quality culture and they play a significant role in assuring that the necessary resources are available to support quality initiatives. When the quality principles are implemented holistically, a culture for academic excellence is created (Blankstein, 1996; Davies, A. Douglas & J. Douglas, 2007).

In higher education, culture highly depends upon the curriculum. The failure of quality may be caused due to the poor design and nature of curriculum. The non flexibility and rigidity in curriculum may cause hindrances in the adaptation and delivery of curriculum in the context of quality initiatives (Kohn, 1993). The deficient financial and other material resources also influence the activities for self assessment. Quality may be realized by providing strategic and systematic training to entire work force (Gapp & Fisher, 2006).

The key factors that influence the quality of higher education are considered as “the quality of faculty, curriculum standards, technological infrastructure available, research environment, academic culture, accreditation regime, leadership and the administrative policies and procedures implemented in institutions of higher education” (Ali, 2008). Most accrediting bodies are insisting that institutions assess students’ learning outcomes as a means of improving academic programs. This has led The Higher Education Commission (HEC) to develop methods for assessing the quality of academic programs. For this purpose SAM is introduced to measure the quality in higher education institutions. Self assessment is conducted by the institution to verify that either the existing programs meet their objectives and institutional goals or not. A self-assessment is required for continuous improvement in organizational performance (Crosby, 1979; Deming, 1986; Mele & Colucio, 2006; Neves & Nakhai, 1993). HEC, Govt of Pakistan has asked public sector universities to implement self assessment technique for assessing and then raising the standard of education in their respective institutions. For this purpose Quality Enhancement Cells have been established in these universities. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the effect of top management (Vice Chancellors, Dean of the faculties, Directors and Heads of departments) and academic culture in implementing SAM in each department of these selected universities. The SAM applied in Pakistani Universities is based on eight criterions: Program Mission; Objectives and Outcomes; Curriculum Design and Organization; Laboratories and Computing Facilities; Student Support and Advising; Process Control; Faculty; Institutional Facilities and Institutional Support. The paper focuses on only public universities of Pakistan, which are practicing Quality Management

System in their Universities. Private sector universities are excluded in the sample. The questionnaire was also limited to only two factors that influence the quality of higher education i.e. Leadership and Academic culture.

Method and Procedure

This study was based on a survey to evaluate the affect of leadership and academic culture on self assessment activities. For this purpose a questionnaire was designed and sent to 25 Public Sector Universities of Pakistan. The questionnaire was filled by Director Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC), five Head of the Departments and three Deans of respective Universities. The questionnaire was consisting of four major components:

- 1) Demographic information
- 2) Implementation of TQM
- 3) Role of leadership in implementation of SAM
- 4) Role of culture in implementation of SAM

The first part sought general information about the institution and the programs. Second part of the questionnaire was about the practicing level of TQM in their universities. Last two sections intended to measure the effects of Leadership and Academic Culture on the implementation of Self Assessment. From the perspective to measure role of leadership, it was divided into four dimensions, the role of Vice Chancellor, Director QEC, Deans of Faculties and Heads of Departments. This section also further, attempted to find out the capacity of universities in terms of financial, human and technical resources for their efficient and effective operations in the university to maintain its competitive edge. The questionnaire contains 45 items that included all the elements from the literature. The order of items was deliberately arranged according to the order of the proposition. The questionnaire was based on five point Likert scale.

Data Analysis

Data analysis shows that the top management in the public universities is interested to bring quality in higher education institutions and provide resources to organize training sessions for the concerned faculty members and employees of the university, so that capacity of human resources can be enhanced. These results also confirmed that top management has established QECs and have included expenditures of these cells in the recurring budget of the universities. The management also provides time to design effective planning for its operations. The detailed analysis is shown below.

Table 1:
Analysis of factors contributing for implementation of SAM (N=108)

Statement	Mean
Training Sessions are regularly conducted for faculty/ staff.	3.52
Top Management provides time for planning.	3.56
Top Management is committed for enhancement of Quality.	4.15
University has well established and documented Quality Management System.	3.66
Vision and Mission Statement are well defined and documented.	3.82
Quality Policy is documented and displayed on important locations.	3.09
Quality Assurance Procedures are implemented in Non-Teaching Areas (<i>i.e.</i> Registrar Offices, Treasurer Offices, Controller Offices)	2.53
Institute activities are reviewed for continuous Improvement on regular basis.	3.67
Technical staff at institute is well trained.	3.30
Class rooms are equipped with Modern Technology (<i>i.e.</i> multimedia, projector and computers).	3.29
The University considers society as customer.	3.50
Students are encouraged to provide feedback about the quality of education they receive.	4.44
QEC has sufficient Human Resources.	3.31
QEC has sufficient Financial Resources.	3.62
QEC has sufficient Technical Resources. (<i>i.e.</i> computer, telephone, Fax etc.)	3.95
QEC of this University has Sufficient Space / Offices for its staff.	3.54
QEC at the University organizes workshops for faculty members on quality issues regularly	3.60
Self Assessment Manual is being implemented in all the departments of the University.	3.66
Director QEC finds Chairman/Head of the Department/Directors of the institute co-operative in implementing SAM.	3.62
Director QEC is full time employee of the Cell.	3.31
Program Teams have been constituted in all departments.	4.02
Head of Department regularly reviews & monitor the ongoing program.	3.58
Deans of the Faculty are aware of Self Assessment procedures.	3.94
Deans of the Faculty Review and Monitor the Institutional activities regularly.	3.52
The Dean reviews and discusses implementation of SAM in Chairman's meeting.	3.57
The V.C has formulated Steering Committee to speed up the implementation of Self Assessment Manual.	3.38
The V.C has provided sufficient Financial Resources to QEC for effective implementation of SAM.	3.84

The V.C has provided sufficient Human Resources to QEC.	3.79
The V.C has provided sufficient Technical Resources to QEC. (<i>i.e.</i> Computer, Fax, Telephone, internet etc.)	4.15
The V.C has nominated Director QEC for Dean’s committee of the University.	3.93
The V.C has nominated Director QEC in Advance Studies & Research Board (ASRB).	3.97
The V.C spends sufficient time with Director QEC in reviewing status of SAM implementation.	3.98
Departments/Colleges are created in the university after fulfilling the Procedures and Criteria of the establishment of new department.	3.93
The staff wants freedom to perform their duties rather than interference of others.	3.92
The staff members avoid getting their work to be evaluated by Management.	3.01
The Faculty Members at the university does not like their evaluation done by students.	2.83
The staff is quite reluctant to use quality terms like “Customer” term for student.	3.27
Faculty members feel burden in doing Self Assessment Activities.	3.38
Faculty members are aware of Self Assessment Process.	3.90
At each level Quality Assurance is the top priority of our University.	3.91
Academic Staff Association interferes in Self Assessment activities.	2.69
Students Union/Group, sometimes interfere in Self Assessment process.	2.43
HEC regularly reviews and monitor the progress of QECs.	4.04
HEC Quality Assurance staff visits the University regularly.	3.13
HEC provides necessary support to QECs for effective implementation of Self Assessment Manual (SAM).	3.88

(Strongly Disagree =1, Disagree=2, Undecided=3, Agree=4, Strongly Agree=5)

Table 1 shows the mean values for all the statements of the survey questionnaire. This questionnaire consisted of six sections comprising of Role of Management (Statement 1-12), Role of QEC (Statements 13-20), Role of Deans (Statements 21-25), Role of Vice Chancellor (Statements 26-32), Role of Culture (Statements 33-41) and Role of HEC (Statements 42-45). The statements: Students are encouraged to provide feedback about the quality of education they receive (4.44), QEC has sufficient Technical Resources. (*i.e.* computer, telephone, Fax etc.) (3.95), Program Teams have been constituted in all departments (4.02), The V.C has provided sufficient Technical Resources to QEC. (*i.e.* Computer, Fax, Telephone, internet etc.) (4.15), Departments/Colleges are created in the university after fulfilling the procedures and criteria of the establishment of new department (3.93) and HEC regularly reviews and monitor the progress of QECs (4.04) gathered the maximum values from each section in the opinion of

respondents. The analysis shows that top management is committed for the implementation of quality initiatives in the higher education institutions. The statements: Academic Staff Association interferes in Self Assessment activities (2.69), Students Union/Group, sometimes interfere in Self Assessment process (2.43) and Quality Assurance Procedures are implemented in Non-Teaching Areas (*i.e.* Registrar Offices, Treasurer Offices, Controller Offices) (2.53) bears minimum values which tend to the undecided option.

Figure 1:

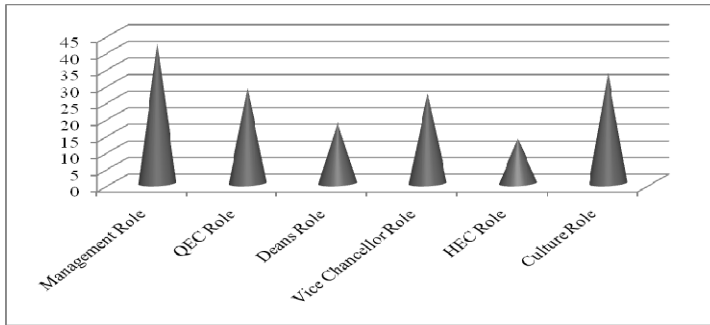


Figure 1 illustrates that in the opinion of respondents the top management and culture role is more than the rest of all the other types of roles in Implementation of SAM in their universities.

Table 2:
Analysis of different roles on the basis of nature of university

Roles	Nature of University	N	Mean	F	df	t
Role of Management	General	62	39.13	0.053	105	-4.666*
	Professional	45	46.09			
Role of QEC	General	62	27.19	0.010	106	-3.428*
	Professional	46	30.52			
Role of Deans	General	61	17.64	4.608	97.953	-2.102*
	Professional	46	19.35			
Role of Vice Chancellor	General	62	26.66	5.954	91.326	-0.606
	Professional	46	27.54			
Role of HEC	General	62	13.66	3.357	106	0.410
	Professional	46	13.22			
Role of Culture	General	62	34.15	0.568	106	1.130
	Professional	46	32.07			
Role of Leadership	General	61	83.54	1.432	104	-3.317*
	Professional	45	93.02			

**Significant at .05 level*

t-values reveal that there is a significant difference in ‘role of management’ (-4.666), ‘role of QEC’ (-3.428), ‘role of deans’ (-2.102) and ‘role of leadership’ (-3.317) (Table 2) for the general and the professional type of universities. Further the mean values indicate that the Professional universities show better role than the General universities. It is also obvious that there is no difference in opinion of the respondents for the ‘role of HEC’, ‘role of vice chancellor’ and the ‘role of culture’ in the implementation of SAM. It means that both types of universities have their same role in quality initiatives.

Table 3:
Analysis of different roles on the basis of system of education (Semester System, Annual System & Both) in the universities

Roles		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Role of Management	Between Groups	363.857	2	181.928	2.706	0.072
	Within Groups	6991.807	104	67.229		
	Total	7355.664	106			
Role of QEC	Between Groups	206.631	2	103.316	3.981	0.022
	Within Groups	2725.035	105	25.953		
	Total	2931.667	107			
Role of Deans	Between Groups	14.075	2	7.038	0.337	0.714
	Within Groups	2168.971	104	20.855		
	Total	2183.047	106			
Role of Vice Chancellor	Between Groups	3.199	2	1.599	0.023	0.977
	Within Groups	7212.653	105	68.692		
	Total	7215.852	107			
Role of HEC	Between Groups	26.285	2	13.142	0.423	0.656
	Within Groups	3258.632	105	31.035		
	Total	3284.917	107			
Role of Culture	Between Groups	275.470	2	137.735	1.551	0.217
	Within Groups	9323.271	105	88.793		
	Total	9598.741	107			
Role of Leadership	Between Groups	528.898	2	264.449	1.144	0.322
	Within Groups	23803.139	103	231.098		
	Total	24332.038	105			

**Significant at .05 level*

ANOVA (Table 3) shows that there is no significant difference in different roles for implementation of SAM except the role of QEC for the universities having Semester, Annual or Both types of system of education. It may be concluded that SAM implementation does not rely on semester or annual system of education in Pakistani universities.

Table 4:
Multiple comparisons of QEC role

(I) System of Education	(J) System of Education	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Semester	Annual	3.700*	1.638	.026	0.45	6.95
	Both	-1.829	1.361	.182	-4.53	0.87
Annual	Semester	-3.700*	1.638	.026	-6.95	-0.45
	Both	-5.529*	1.971	.006	-9.44	-1.62
Both	Semester	1.829	1.361	.182	-0.87	4.53
	Annual	5.529*	1.971	.006	1.62	9.44

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Multiple comparisons of QEC role (LSD) show that semester system is better than the annual system of education for implementation of SAM in terms of QEC role (Table 4). Semester followed by Semester cum annual (Both) systems of education are contributing better than the simple annual system of education.

Discussion

For any academic institution or organization, leadership and academic culture has a great influence to achieve quality goals. In the literature review it was concluded that appropriate management or leadership style is necessary for the successful implementation of Quality Management System. In this study it is obvious that there is a consensus among respondents that leadership and culture both have great effect on implementation of self assessment manual. Leadership (Vice Chancellor, Dean, Director, Heads of Departments) is committed for implementation of self assessment manual and provides favorable culture for quality initiatives. Top management in developing countries is mostly not committed to quality initiatives and is reluctant to delegate authority (Djerdjour & Patel, 2000). Kaplinsky (1995) identified reasons for lack of top management support for TQM in developing countries and conclude that in developing countries, many organizations are family owned which may cause resistance for proper corporate functioning. However, it is noticed from the data that quality policy is not documented and defined to its members in an efficient way. If the universities want to bring improvement in higher education they should formulate quality policy which should be documented, displayed on the notice boards, informed to all stakeholders and regularly reviewed by the top management. The Jarratt (1985) strongly recommended that Higher Education

institutions should have clear quality objectives. Perhaps these public universities have included their objectives in vision and mission statements rather than to have separate institutional quality policy.

Culture is influencing the execution of the self assessment process in Pakistani universities. Successful adoption and implementation of Quality Management System needs special attention to organizational culture. Bruun & Mefford (1996) recommended that TQM programs in developing countries should be accompanied by changes in organizational culture as programs (Mendonca, 2001). Yong & Wilkinson (1999) examined cultural issues within the quality management context from a human resource perspective and argue that “Even in culturally homogenous societies, the issue of cultural change plays a key role in determining the success of quality management implementation, but because of the competitive push for the adoption of TQM and the pervasiveness of perspective market driven consultancy packages, managers have already neglected to tailor quality initiatives to suit their own organizational cultures”. Madu (1992) argues that as multinational corporations have adopted strategies that work well within the confines of developing economies cultures, developing countries have to tailor quality management practices according to their own culture, as issue is not whether quality management practices should be adopted but how to implement these practices.

From the feedback provided by the respondents it may be concluded that leadership and culture has great effect on implementation of self assessment in Public sector universities in Pakistan. Most institutions in Pakistan are practicing self assessment procedures in their institute but they neither have clear missions nor the documented activities. Leaders are usually not trained in the tools and techniques used to improve systems and processes. Leadership in a university is very complex, as it includes abilities of faculty and academicians to conceive the vision of quality. This aspect is not limited to the Vice Chancellors, Deans, Directors, Principals or Head of Departments but also required in instructors to provide the leadership in their classrooms. To improve the quality of ones institute, all teachers and administrators, need to be committed with their quality goals and measure their processes and activities, to improve the quality of their institutions. Every faculty member of institution must assess the quality of his/her work. This sort of leadership can not be developed or continued by faculty and administrators without teamwork, long term quality goals, intensive efforts, proper training, right policies, and strong commitment, because they are responsible for developing an environment to encourage and motivate faculty members. Therefore top management needs to embrace self assessment as a strategy to achieve the quality results. It is worth noted that the interference from the students’ and teachers’ associations is not seen by the respondents. Quality Enhancement Cells are playing a significant role in implementation of SAM in

Pakistani higher education institutions. QEC needs to organize training sessions for faculty on regular basis with the focus on importance of self assessment in the institution for quality services. Semester and Semester with Annual system (Both) of education are contributing better regarding QEC role. Semester system of education should be implemented for better results in quality enhancement practices in Pakistani higher education institutions. Moreover students, faculty members and employees should be taken on board and all these stakeholders should have clarity about the self assessment techniques.

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